

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GRANTS-IN-AID SYSTEM TO FUND SCHOOL EDUCATION IN UNITED PROVINCES IN MODERN INDIA

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Abstract

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the advent of a change in the hitherto followed traditional system of education in India. The East India Company, tasked with the administration of a vast territory, gradually went from a policy of non-intervention and detachment, towards active reform in the structure of education in India, based on the English model. This paper attempts to capture the early stirrings of modern educational development in India. It seeks to streamline years of structured proposals and policies, ranging from the Charter Act of 1813, to Wood's Dispatch of 1854, coupled with individual efforts of many officials, that ultimately brought about a grants-in-aid system, to establish modern learning on secular grounds. The system, which sought to achieve the uniform development of educational institutions on non-religious grounds, through grants-in-aid provided by the Government, seemed just and participative, but also suffered from limitations on diverse and vernacular interests.

Even though the education system in India saw further development to reach its present form, this paper highlights the crucial and imperative understanding we must possess, of the ideals and the means that went into introducing modern education in the country.

Keywords- *English education, Vernacular, grants-in-aid, Wood's Dispatch, Macaulay's Minute, Charter Act of 1813*

Introduction

The early modern structure of school education in India started emerging from the onset of the second half of the nineteenth century, with the implementation of the grants-in-aid system. Initially, the East India Company (EIC) adopted a neutral policy of non-interference in the sphere of education, its employees largely preoccupied with their business interests. (Mukerji, 1957, p. 22). However, at the same time, the Company continued to recognize the earlier endowments made to educational institutions, with the rent-free grants recognized in perpetuity in the Permanent Settlement of 1784. (Mukerji, p.22).

This situation was bound to change in the last decade of the eighteenth century, with the firm belief of Charles Grant who was convinced that England had a mission of regenerating Hindu society. He felt that the mode of this transformation was to be brought about through English language. (Basu, 1982, p.2). Grant's perception coincided with the beginning of Evangelical pressure on the Company to adopt a proactive policy on the subject of education in India. It was with the passing of the Charter Act of 1813 that the Company's Court of Directors in England initiated a humble beginning towards the development of education in India. The Act provided for an annual expenditure of one lakh of rupees for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India along with the introduction and promotion of the knowledge of modern sciences among the inhabitants of British territories. (Grover & Grover, 2000, p.368). This clause of the Act can be rightly considered to constitute the foundation stone of the British education system in India, with the realization by the British parliament that education in the country had a claim on public revenues. This principle was not recognized in England till 1823. (Mukerji, p.28).

With these developments the demand for western education witnessed a gradual increase within the country. The progressive public opinion became inclined towards forging a closer bond between the people and their rulers. Cultural fascination for western education drew many in that direction. The higher classes already started learning English while the middle classes exhibited a keen desire towards studying the language. (Mukerji, p.28). Private initiative also trickled in, with rich citizens in erstwhile Calcutta (Kolkata) and Bombay (Mumbai) coming together with Englishmen, official and non-official, to organize the Native school and Book societies. (Selections from Educational Records, 1915, p.4). Individual European officials and businessmen including Sir Edward Hyde East, David Hare, Sir Edward Ryan and James Young made a significant contribution towards promoting English education in Calcutta. These efforts culminated in the foundation of Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 and the Elphinstone Institute in Bombay, a decade later. (Basu, p.4). However, it was not until 1823 that the Government became serious in formalizing its role in the sphere of Indian education. A General Committee on Public Instruction was set up in Calcutta for the purpose of devising measures "with a view to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and to the improvement of their moral character." The Company thus transferred the whole educational grant and the entire management of education to itself. (Mukerji, p.55).

Towards the system of Grants-in-aid

As is imperative with governance, the increasing administrative requirements generate the necessity of trained local officials to discharge public duties. The Directors of the Company were not far from this realization and in the Dispatch of September 5, 1827 this was taken up as the first object to impart English education to the Indians. This was a matter of political expediency, but with the advent of William Bentinck as Company's governor-general in 1829, the scope of the Company's stake in education was set to widen further. He declared his intention in a letter to the Committee, of gradually and eventually making English the language of public business throughout the country. (Mukerji, p.64). He received the support of the Court of Directors and significant changes ensued shortly after the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1833. Macaulay was appointed as the first Law member, a fresh post, to the governor general's council, and favored the Anglicists above the Orientalists (from the Committee) in his famous Minute on educational policy submitted on February 2, 1835 to the Executive Council. This was accepted by Bentinck's administration through the Resolution of March 7, 1835 wherein from now on the object of the Company would be the promotion of European literature and sciences through the medium of the English language. Furthermore, all funds allotted to education were to be spent for the purpose. These measures brought about a rapid growth of English education. (Grover & Grover, p.370).

Wood's Dispatch and the Formalization of the Grants-in-aid

The Wood's dispatch of 1854 (Basu, pp. 7-8), also considered as the Magna Carta of English education in India objectified the spread of western education as the aim of the government. The English language was recognized as the medium of instruction for higher education as it was considered as the most perfect medium of education. The dispatch suggested the setting up of Vernacular primary schools in the villages at the lowest stage, Anglo-vernacular high schools and an affiliated college at the district level. Most important here was the recommendation of a system of grants-in-aid to encourage and foster private enterprise in the field of education. A Department of Public instruction under the charge of a director was established in each of the five provinces.¹ (Grover & Grover, pp. 371-372). Moreover, it was also proposed to set up Universities on the model of the London University for Calcutta, Bombay and Madras (Chennai). The dispatch emphasized the importance of vocational instruction and the need for establishing technical schools and colleges. Among the recommendations were included setting up of teacher's training institutions on the model prevalent in England and advancing cordial support for women education. The responsibility of the government was more or less fixed for providing education to the underprivileged. The government was also directed to focus its energies on primary education. (Grover & Grover, pp. 371-372).

Grants-in-aid: Rules and conditions

The grants-in-aid system was finally introduced in 1856-57. The rules initially framed on a provisional basis were revised in 1858. The rules for grants-in-aid were finally approved by the Governor General on July 14, 1858 (No. 948) by a notification and subsequently published for general information.² (Ritchey, Selection from Educational Records, 1922, p.274).

Rules:

1. Government grant was to be sanctioned for each school with sound secular instruction imparted in English or Vernacular based on local requirements and availability of funds. However, the grant was not to exceed the sum expended on the school from private sources.
2. The schools desirous of receiving assistance from the government were required to submit a written application through their managers.

Conditions:

1. The school was functioning under adequate local management with two thirds of pupils on the fee roll and those “exempted from payment being bonafide indigents.” This condition was waived in cases of the Normal and Female schools where no fee was to be charged.
2. The school had a proper and sufficient accommodation except in cases where an application was also made for a building grant.
3. The maintenance expenditure assigned from the funds contributed by private persons or associations did not fall below the average amount expended for that purpose during the past three-year period.
4. The management of the school had to assure its existence and functioning for a further period of three years from the date of receiving such grant.
5. The school had to maintain proper accounts and budgeting of expenditure as the required grants were not to exceed the school expenditure defrayed by contribution from private sources. The school bodies and grants were to be devoted to single or more special objects with the amount of aid solicited towards the furtherance of each stated distinctively.
6. The school had to be open to inspection and examination by Education officers of the government pertaining to secular instruction only.

Special objects:

The special objects for the fulfillment of which the government aid, as per local requirements and availability of disposable funds would be advanced comprised (Ritchey, p.275) –

1. Augmentation of the salary of a teacher or teachers;
2. Payment of the salary or salaries of an additional teacher or teachers;

3.Foundation of scholarships and pupil teacherships;

4.Donation of school books, maps and apparatus;

5.Supply at half-price of school books issued under the authority of government;

6.Erection, or enlargement or repair of school houses. In this case, where a grant was sought for building purpose or repair the application was to be appended with a tabular statement having complete and distinct information. Specific conditions had to be fulfilled in such cases

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a)It was imperative for the managers of the school to satisfy the government that the grant shall be utilized for erection of building situated in a healthy environment i.e., favorable and receptive;

b)Submission of estimate and plan of the building;

c)The management of the building was to comprise solely of private persons or bodies which were supporting it;

d)Teachers whose salaries were partly or fully paid by the government were to be entirely subordinate to the management or those conducting the school and were not to be regarded as government servants;

e) The government was not to interfere in the actual management of the school but seek frequent reports from its inspectors upon its secular functioning notwithstanding which the aid was to be withdrawn;

f) The continuation of government aid provided it is utilized for improvement of education and not put to private in place of public expenditure;

g) The grants-in-aid was to be awarded on the principle of strict religious neutrality h)and to remain uninfluenced from the fact of imparting of any religious doctrine or vice versa. (Ritchey, p.276).

Review of the utilization of aid and suggestions for disbursement

The system was under continuous monitoring of government officials with the process of inspection and submission of reports on a regular basis as is clear from the imposition of conditions mentioned above. These reports were reviewed by the Director who then submitted his report for improvement in the system. In his report for the year 1857-58 on the schools receiving grants the Director observed-

The schools assisted are, without exception, Missionary institutions, i.e., supported by Christian missions. But though the missionary bodies alone have taken advantage of the offers of assistance made by the Government the grants are strictly devoted to the improvement and enlargement of secular instructions. (Ritchey, p.232).

The government remained very clear in its objective of administering grants on a non-religious basis.

The issue of the system of capitation grants was brought up by the Director in the five points for grants-in-aid to Anglo-vernacular schools in conference with the secretary.³ (Education Department, File No. 31, 1888, p.2). It was reported to be objectionable in many ways, particularly the system of diminishing the amount of the rate of grant based on the opinion of the inspector. A higher class of Inspector was required in such cases than could be secured throughout the province. The Director proposed that the sanctioned grant for each section should be split in three parts-

a) One to be a fixed amount, which in case of certain schools, was not to be liable to variation for a period of three years;

b) Second to be a grant on the result of examinations;

c) Third to be a discipline grant.

A stable income of the school was ensured by these means, with a limited scope to the opinion of the Inspector within which it could be trusted safely. The upper limit of the grant was to be fixed at one half of the admitted expenditure. (Education Department, File No. 31, p.2).

Review of the Functioning of the Grants-in-aid

The working of the system of Grants-in-aid was considered to be the point of utmost importance for the cause of education as noted in the report of the Inspector during the quinquennium (1892-93 to 1896-97). The necessity for strict enforcement of the rules was emphasized. The main drawback of the system discovered here was a tendency to stereotype educational methods and apply the same yardstick of assessment to each school. This prevented the schools from developing according to their own inclinations or to the local requirements. It was thus proposed that the schools which had not been in existence for long be made to conform strictly to the rules, while flexible standards be applied to those long established, allowing them greater freedom than enjoyed earlier. Their grant could be fixed upon certain guarantees for a period of three to five years. The advancement of grants for such institutions based on an annual review was not to be adopted as a benchmark for assessment as it did not afford a correct judgement of their work. The annual performance was bound to fluctuate, and hence fixing grant on the result of Inspector's visit and University and Departmental examinations had a depressing effect upon some of the best Aided schools. A different scale of assessment for fixing of the grants-in-aid was thus proposed for these schools which had held a high position for a long time and maintained functional efficiency and financial stability.⁴ (Cotton, Progress of Education in India, 1892-93 to 1896-97, 1898, pp.143-144).

Categorization, Administration and Value of Grants-in-aid

There were three types of tuition grants for the English schools- a) the fixed grant; b) the attendance and merit grant; c) the public examination grant. The total grants under these heads could not exceed- a) the school income from fee and private sources; b) one half the annual expenditure and the income from sources other than the grants-in-aid. Further, the grants could be reduced if the school did not hold the prescribed number of school meetings in a year and in case of inefficiency. There were special grants which could be given in lieu or addition to ordinary grants for new schools for special staff and backward localities.⁵ (Nathan, Progress of Education in India, 1897-98 to 1901-02, 1904, p.102). The Vernacular primary schools received grants which were fixed with reference to the character and utility of the school and the funds at the disposal of the Board with the annual review of grants. (Nathan, p.144).

The report for the year 1907-12 mentions the disbursal of the grants (within certain maxima⁶) (Orange, Progress of Education in India, 1907-12, 1914, p.86) in two forms. First, there was a fixed grant according to the sections included in the school, viz., Rs. 750 a year in case of the high section. A grant of Rs. 3 a year was given for every pupil in attendance in the high and middle sections. Further, special grants were advanced, divided into preliminary and additional. (Orange, p.86). In the United Provinces in particular the grant averaged from Rs. 2,550 to over Rs. 3,600 annually. (Orange, p.87). As regards primary education the grant was at times disbursed from provincial and from board funds on the other. (Orange, p.119).

A system of fixed grants was in vogue in the province, differentiated on the basis of provision of money from the government or the funds from the board as stated above. The so-called primary English school was aided by the government and could receive Rs. 150 annually on a fixed basis, an attendance grant of Rs. 2 or Rs. 1-8-0 (1 rupee 8 anna and 0 paise) a year for each pupil in average attendance according to the standard in which he read. In addition, a special grant not exceeding one-fifth the salary of each trained teacher in the upper primary section, was also given. The ordinary Vernacular school was aided by the Board and received, upon fulfilment of necessary conditions, Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 a month. In cases where the number of pupils had exceeded 25 during the previous year, one rupee extra was given if there was only one teacher, Rs. 3 for each assistant if his presence was required. The province code permitted a grant of Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 a quarter in the indigenous schools. (Orange, pp.119-120).

Present Scenario

As per the observations of the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development/Education (2018, 2020, 2021) the allocation of funds to the Department of School Education and Literacy was much below its proposals. From the year 2018-22, there was a shortfall of Rs 15,500 crore, Rs 22,700 crore, and Rs 43,000 crore respectively. In terms of percentage, the Department thus received only 76 per cent, 72 per cent and 56 per cent of the sought funding in these years, respectively. (Asthana, Pre Legislative Research, p.2). The question as to how much is being spent by the Uttar Pradesh Government on school education is clear from the data of per child and per student spending on school education in the 13th and 14th FC (Finance Commission) period respectively. (Policy Brief, 2018, Budgeting for School

Education in Uttar Pradesh: What has changed and what has not?, p. 2). The per child value is taken to indicate the resource availability for each school going child and per student value is indicative of each school enrolled child respectively. A comparison of both the indicators during the 13th and 14th FC period reveals an increase in both per child and per student spending in the 14th FC year as compared to the 13th FC year. A substantial increase is reflected in the disaggregated picture of the per child spending by level of education between 2014-15 and 2017-18, of the order of 113 per cent in elementary education, 38 percent in secondary education and 98 per cent in school education. In the same manner, an absolute increase was reflected in per student spending in all levels of school education between 2014-15 (A) and 2016-17 (RE- Revised Estimate). The increase in percentage was of the order of 272 at elementary level, 92 at secondary and 228 in school education. (Policy Brief, p. 2).

Conclusion

In the present times, increasing privatization and rising costs of living brings to the fore the continued necessity of government aid in the form of funding and subsidy to the education sector. This is essential to ensure education for all, particularly the underprivileged and poverty-stricken segments of our society. Apart from being an essential feature of the welfare state, it is also an investment in human resource for the future.

NOTES

1. United Provinces was initially North Western provinces in 1836 (north-west part of the Bengal Presidency known as Presidency of Agra in 1833 as provided by the new act with the swearing in of Sir Charles Metcalfe as the new governor. However, this plan of the fourth government had always been objected to by the directors as involving a large unnecessary expenditure and hence was never fully carried out. Its duties were so restricted that it became a mere misnomer to call it a government and an act was passed on 31st of August 1835 authorizing the court of directors under the control of the board of commissioners to suspend the execution of the Act 3 and 4 Wm. IV. c. 85 so far as related to the division of the presidency of Fort William of Bengal, into two distinct presidencies, one of which was to be styled as presidency of Agra. Henceforth the governor general would appoint from time to time, any servant of East India Company with ten years of service experience in India to the office of lieutenant governor of the North-western provinces under the presidency of Fort William in Bengal. The extent of territory of the province and the authority of the lieutenant governor was to be declared and might be limited by the governor-general in council from time to time. With these provisions completely in accordance with the views of the court of directors and immediately availed by them led to the abandonment of all idea of a separate presidency of Agra- Henry Beveridge, *A Comprehensive History of India, Volume III, Book VII, 1862 Reprint, Delhi, 1990, pp. 309-310*) which came to include the Provinces of Oudh in 1877 and the name changed to United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1902 and finally United Provinces in 1912 with Lucknow as Centre - *The Imperial Gazetteer of India vol., XXIV, Travancore to Zira, Oxford, 1908, p. 132.*

2.Ritchey, J. A., Selection from Educational Records, Part II, 1840-59, Bureau of Education, India, Calcutta, 1922, p.274.

3.Education Department File No. 31 July 1888, Report of the Indian Education Commission appointed by the Resolution of the Government of India dated 3rd February 1882, p. 2, National Archives of India (NAI) New Delhi.

4.Cotton, J. S., Progress of Education in India, 1892-93 to 1896-97, Third Quinquennial Review, Darling & Son Ltd., London, 1898, pp. 143-144.

5.Nathan, R., Progress of Education in India: 1897-98 to 1901-02, Vol. I, Fourth Quinquennial Review, Darling & Son Ltd., London, 1904, p. 102.

6.Maxima implies here that no school could ordinarily claim maximum grant as a matter of right. The actual expenditure and private income (self-help from subscription and fees) were to be always considered as factors determining the limit of permissible aid. Orange, H.W., Progress of Education in India: 1907-12, Vol. I, Sixth Quinquennial Review, Darling & Son Ltd., London, 1914, p. 86.

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